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ART. I.—*Salem Witchcraft; with an Account of Salem Village, and a History of Opinions on Witchcraft and kindred subjects.* By CHARLES W. UPHAM. 2 vols. Boston (U.S.): 1867.

THE name of the village of Salem is as familiar to Americans as that of any provincial town in England or France is to Englishmen and Frenchmen; yet, when uttered in the hearing of Europeans, it carries us back two or three centuries, and suggests an image, however faint and transient, of the life of the Pilgrim Fathers, who gave that sacred name to the place of their chosen habitation. If we were on the spot to-day, we should see a modern American seaport, with an interest of its own, but by no means a romantic one. At present Salem is suffering its share of the adversity which has fallen upon the shipping trade, while it is still mourning the loss of some of its noblest citizens in the late civil war. No community in the Republic paid its tribute of patriotic sacrifice more generously; and there were doubtless occasions when its citizens remembered the early days of glory, when their fathers helped to chase the retreating British, on the first shedding of blood in the War of Independence. But now they have enough to think of under the pressure of the hour. Their trade is paralysed under the operation of the tariff; their shipping is rotting in port, except so much of it as is sold to foreigners; there is much poverty in low places, and dread of further commercial adversity among the chief citizens; but there is the same vigorous pursuit of intellectual interests and pleasures, throughout the society of the place, that there always is wherever any number of New Englanders have made their

homes beside the church, the library, and the school. Whatever other changes may occur from one age or period to another, the features of natural scenery are, for the most part, unalterable. Massachusetts Bay is as it was when the Pilgrims cast their first look over it. Its blue waters—as blue as the seas of Greece—rippling up upon the sheeted snow of the sands in winter, or beating against rocks glittering in ice; in autumn the pearly waves flowing in under the thickets of gaudy foliage; and on summer evenings the green surface surrounding the amethyst islands, where white foam spouts out of the caves and crevices. On land, there are still the craggy hills, and the jutting promontories of granite, where the barberry grows as the bramble does with us, and room is found for the farmstead between the crags, and for the apple-trees and little slopes of grass, and patches of tillage, where all else looks barren. The boats are out, or ranged on shore, according to the weather, just as they were from the beginning, only in larger numbers; and far away on either hand the coasts and islands, the rocks, and hills and rural dwellings are as of old, save for the shrinking of the forest, and the growth of the cities and villages, whose spires and school-houses are visible here or there.

Yet there are changes, marked and memorable, both in Salem and its neighbourhood, since the date of thirty-seven years ago. There was then an exclusiveness about the place as evident to strangers, and as dear to natives, as the rivalry between Philadelphia and Baltimore, while far more interesting and honourable in its character. In Salem society there was a singular combination of the precision and scrupulousness of Puritan manners and habits of thought with the pride of a cultivated and travelled community, boasting acquaintance with people of all known faiths, and familiarity with all known ways of living and thinking, while adhering to the customs, and even the prejudices, of their fathers. While relating theological conversations held with liberal Buddhists or lax Mohammedans, your host would whip his horse, to get home at full speed by sunset on a Saturday, that the groom's Sabbath might not be encroached on for five minutes. The houses were hung with odd Chinese copies of English engravings, and furnished with a variety of pretty and useful articles from China, never seen elsewhere, because none but American traders had then achieved any commerce with that country but in tea, nankeen, and silk. The Salem Museum was the glory of the town, and even of the State. Each speculative merchant who went forth, with or without a cargo (and the trade in ice



was then only beginning) in his own ship, with his wife and her babes, was determined to bring home some offering to the Museum, if he should accomplish a membership of that institution by doubling either Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope. He picked up an odd cargo somewhere, and trafficked with it for another; and so he went on—if not rounding the world, seeing no small part of it, and making acquaintance with a dozen eccentric potentates and barbaric chiefs, and sovereigns with widely celebrated names; and, whether the adventurer came home rich or poor, he was sure to have gained much knowledge, and to have become very entertaining in discourse. The houses of the principal merchants were pleasant abodes—each standing alone, beside the street which was an avenue, thick strewn with leaves in autumn, and well shaded in summer. Not far away were the woods, where lumbering went on, for the export of timber to Charleston and New Orleans, and for the furniture manufacture, which was the main industry of the less fertile districts of Massachusetts in those days. Here and there was a little lake—a ‘pond’—under the shadow of the woods, yielding water-lilies in summer, and ice for exportation in winter—as soon as that happy idea had occurred to some fortunate speculator. On some knoll there was sure to be a schoolhouse. Amidst these and many other pleasant objects, and in the very centre of the stranger’s observations, there was one spectacle that had no beauty in it—just as in the happy course of the life of the Salem community there is one fearful period. That dreary object is the Witches’ Hill at Salem; and that fearful chapter of history is the tragedy of the Witch Delusion.

Our reason for selecting the date of thirty-seven years ago for our glance at the Salem of the last generation is, that at that time a clergyman resident there fixed the attention of the inhabitants on the history of their forefathers by delivering lectures on Witchcraft. This gentleman was then a young man, of cultivated mind and intellectual tastes, a popular preacher, and esteemed and beloved in private life. In delivering those lectures he had no more idea than his audience that he was entering upon the great work and grand intellectual interest of his life. When he concluded the course, he was unconscious of having offered more than the entertainment of a day; yet the engrossing occupation of seven-and-thirty years for himself, and no little employment and interest for others, have grown out of that early effort. He was requested to print the lectures, and did so. They went through more than one edition; and every time he reverted to the sub-

ject, with some fresh knowledge gathered from new sources, he perceived more distinctly how inadequate, and even mistaken, had been his early conceptions of the character of the transactions which constituted the Witch Tragedy. At length he refused to re-issue the volume. 'I was unwilling,' he says in the preface of the book before us, 'to issue again what I had discovered to be an insufficient presentation of the subject.' Meantime, he was penetrating into mines of materials for history, furnished by the peculiar forms of administration instituted by the early rulers of the province. It was an Ordinance of the General Court of Massachusetts, for instance, that testimony should in all cases be taken in the shape of depositions, to be preserved 'in perpetual remembrance.' In all trials, the evidence of witnesses was taken in writing beforehand, the witnesses being present (except in certain cases) to meet any examination in regard to their recorded testimony. These depositions were carefully preserved, in complete order; and thus we may now know as much about the landed property, the wills, the contracts, the assaults and defamation, the thievery and cheating, and even the personal morals and social demeanour of the citizens of Salem of two centuries and a half ago as we could have done if they had had law-reporters in their courts, and had filed those reports, and preserved the police departments of newspapers like those of the present day. The documents relating to the witchcraft proceedings have been for the most part laid up among the State archives; but a considerable number of them have been dispersed—no doubt from their connexion with family history, and under impulses of shame and remorse. Of these, some are safely lodged in literary institutions, and others are in good private hands, though too many have been lost. In a long course of years, Mr. Upham, and after him his sons, have searched out all the documents they could hear of. When they had reason to believe that any transcription of papers was inaccurate—that gaps had been conjecturally filled up, that dates had been mistaken, or that papers had been transposed, they never rested till they had got hold of the originals, thinking the bad spelling, the rude grammar, and strange dialect of the least cultivated country-people less objectionable than the unauthorised amendments of transcribers. Mr. Upham says he has resorted to the originals throughout. Then there were the parish books and the church records, to which was committed in early days very much in the life of individuals which would now be considered a matter of private concern, and scarcely fit for comment by next-door neighbours. The primitive local maps and the coast-



survey chart, with the markings of original grants to settlers, and of bridges, mills, meeting-houses, private dwellings, forest roads, and farm boundaries have been preserved. Between these and deeds of conveyance it has been possible to construct a map of the district, which not only restores the external scene to the mind's eye, but casts a strong and fearful light—as we shall see presently—on the origin and course of the troubles of 1692. Mr. Upham and his sons have minutely examined the territory—tracing the old stone walls and the streams, fixing the gates, measuring distances, even verifying points of view, till the surrounding scenery has become as complete as could be desired. Between the church books and the parish and court records, the character, repute, ways and manners of every conspicuous resident can be ascertained; and it may be said that nothing out of the common way happened to any man, woman, or child within the district which could remain unknown at this day, if anyone wished to make it out. Mr. Upham has wished to make out the real story of the Witch Tragedy: and he has done it in such a way that his readers will doubtless agree that no more accurate piece of history has ever been written than the annals of this New England township.

For such a work, however, something more is required than the most minute delineation of the outward conditions of men and society; and in this higher department of his task Mr. Upham is above all anxious to obtain and dispense true light. The Second Part of his work treats of what may be called the spiritual scenery of the time. He exhibits the superstition of that age, when the belief in Satanic agency was the governing idea of religious life, and the most engrossing and pervading interest known to the Puritans of every country. Of the young and ignorant in the new settlement beyond the seas his researches have led him to write thus:—

‘However strange it seems, it is quite worthy of observation, that the actors in that tragedy, the “afflicted children,” and other witnesses, in their various statements and operations, embraced about the whole circle of popular superstition. How those young country girls, some of them mere children, most of them wholly illiterate, could have become familiar with such fancies, to such an extent, is truly surprising. They acted out, and brought to bear with tremendous effect, almost all that can be found in the literature of that day, and the period preceding it, relating to such subjects. Images and visions which had been portrayed in tales of romance, and given interest to the pages of poetry, will be made by them, as we shall see, to throng the woods, flit through the air, and hover over the heads of a terrified court. The ghosts of murdered wives

and children will play their parts with a vividness of representation and artistic skill of expression that have hardly been surpassed in scenic representations on the stage. In the Salem-witchcraft proceedings, the superstition of the middle ages was embodied in real action. All its extravagant absurdities and monstrosities appear in their application to human experience. We see what the effect has been, and must be, when the affairs of life, in courts of law and the relations of society, or the conduct or feelings of individuals, are suffered to be under the control of fanciful or mystical notions. When a whole people abandons the solid ground of common sense, overleaps the boundaries of human knowledge, gives itself up to wild reveries, and lets loose its passions without restraint, it presents a spectacle more terrific to behold, and becomes more destructive and disastrous, than any convulsion of mere material nature ; than tornado, conflagration, or earthquake.' (Vol. i. p. 468.)

All this is no more than might have occurred to a thoughtful historian long years ago ; but there is yet something else which it has been reserved for our generation to perceive, or at least to declare, without fear or hesitation. Mr. Upham may mean more than some people would in what he says of the new opening made by science into the dark depths of mystery covered by the term Witchcraft ; for he is not only the brother-in-law but the intimate friend and associate of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at Harvard University, and still better known to us, as he is at home, as the writer of the physiological tales, 'Elsie Venner' and the 'Guardian Angel,' which have impressed the public as something new in the literature of fiction. It cannot be supposed that Mr. Upham's view of the Salem Delusion would have been precisely what we find it here if he and Dr. Holmes had never met ; and, but for the presence of the Professor's mind throughout the book, which is most fitly dedicated to him, its readers might have perceived less clearly the true direction in which to look for a solution of the mystery of the story, and its writer might have written something less significant in the place of the following paragraph :—

'As showing how far the beliefs of the understanding, the perceptions of the senses, and the delusions of the imagination may be confounded, the subject belongs not only to theology and moral and political science, but to *physiology*, in its original and proper use, as embracing our whole nature ; and the facts presented may help to conclusions relating to what is justly regarded as the great mystery of our being—the connexion between the body and the mind.' (Vol. i. p. viii.)

The Settlement had its birth in 1620, the date of the charter granted by James I. to 'the Governor and Company of Mas-



‘sachusetts Bay in New England.’ The first policy of the Company was to attract families of good birth, position, education, and fortune, to take up considerable portions of land, introduce the best agriculture known, and facilitate the settling of the country. Hence the tone of manners, the social organisation, and the prevalence of the military spirit, which the subsequent decline in the spirit of the community made it difficult for careless thinkers to understand. Not only did the wealth of this class of early settlers supply the district with roads and bridges, and clear the forest; it set up the pursuit of agriculture in the highest place, and encouraged intellectual pursuits, refined intercourse, and a loftier spirit of colonising enterprise than can be looked for among immigrants whose energies are engrossed by the needs of the day. The mode of dress of the gentry of this class shows us something of their aspect in their new country, when prowling Indians were infesting the woods a stone’s throw from their fences, and when the rulers of the community took it in turn with all their neighbours to act as scouts against the savages. George Corwin was thus dressed—

‘A wrought flowing neckcloth, a sash covered with lace, a coat with short cuffs and reaching halfway between the wrist and elbow; the skirts in plaits below; an octagon ring and cane. The last two articles are still preserved. His inventory mentions “a silver-laced cloth coat, a velvet ditto, a satin waistcoat embroidered with gold, a trooping scarf and silver hat-band, golden-topped and embroidered, and a silver-headed cane.”’ (Vol. i. p. 98.)

This aristocratic element was in large proportion to the total number of settlers. It lifted up the next class to a position inferior only to its own by its connexion with land. The Farmers formed an order by themselves—not by having peculiar institutions, but through the dignity ascribed to agriculture. The yeomanry of Massachusetts hold their heads high to this day and their fathers spoke proudly of themselves as ‘the Farmers. They penetrated the forest in all directions, sat down beside the streams, and ploughed up such level tracts as they found open to the sunshine; so that in a few years ‘the Salem ‘Farms’ constituted a well-defined territory, thinly peopled, but entirely appropriated. In due course parishes were formed round the outskirts of ‘Salem Farms,’ encroaching more or less in all directions, and reducing the area to that which was ultimately known as ‘Salem Village,’ in which some few of the original grants of 500 acres or less remained complete, while others were divided among families or sold. Long before the date of the Salem Tragedy, the strifes which follow upon

the acquisition of land had become common, and there was much ill-blood within the bounds of the City of Peace. The independence, the mode of life, and the pride of the yeomen made them excellent citizens, however, when war broke out with the Indians or with any other foe; and the military spirit of the aristocracy was well sustained by that of the Farmers.

The dignity of the town had been early secured by the wisdom of the Company at home, which had committed to the people the government of the districts in which they were placed; and every citizen felt himself, in his degree, concerned in the rule and good order of the society in which he lived; but the holders of land recognised no real equality between themselves and men of other callings, while the artisans and labourers were ambitious to obtain a place in the higher class. Artisans of every calling needed in a new society had been sent out from England by the Company; and when all the most energetic had acquired as much land as could be had in recompense for special services to the community—as so many acres for ploughing up a meadow, so many for discovering minerals, so many for foiling an Indian raid,—and when the original grants had been broken up, and finally parcelled out among sons and daughters, leaving no scope for new purchasers, the most ambitious of the adventurers applied for tracts in Maine, where they might play their part of First Families in a new settlement. The weaker, the more envious, the more ill-conditioned, thus remained behind, to cavil at their prosperous neighbours, and spite them if they could. Here was an evident preparation for social disturbance, when opportunity for gratifying bad passions should arise.

There had been a preparation for this stage in the temper with which the adventurers had arrived in the country, and the influences which at once operated upon them there. The politics and the religion in which they had grown up were gloomy and severe. Those who were not soured were sad; and, it should be remembered, they fully believed that Satan and his powers were abroad, and must be contended with daily and hourly, and in every transaction of life. In their new home they found little cheer from the sun and the common daylight; for the forest shrouded the entire land beyond the barren seashore. The special enemy, the Red Indian, always watching them and seeking his advantage of them, was not, in their view, a simple savage. Their clergy assured them that the Red Indians were worshippers and agents of Satan; and it is difficult to estimate the effect of this belief on the minds and



tempers of those who were thinking of the Indians at every turn of daily life. The passion which is in the Far West still spoken of as special, under the name of ‘Indian-hating,’ is a mingled ferocity and fanaticism, quite inconceivable by quiet Christians, or perhaps by any but border adventurers; and this passion, kindled by the first demonstration of hostility on the part of the Massachusetts Red Men, grew and spread incessantly under the painful early experience of colonial life. Every man had in turn to be scout, by day and night, in the swamp and in the forest; and every woman had to be on the watch in her husband’s absence to save her babes from murderers and kidnappers. Whatever else they might want to be doing, even to supply their commonest needs, the citizens had first to station themselves within hail of each other all day; and at night to drive in their cattle among the dwellings, and keep watch by turns. Even on Sundays, patrols were appointed to look to the public safety while the community were at church. The mothers carried their babes to the meeting-house, rather than venture to stay at home in the absence of husband and neighbours. One function of the Sabbath patrol indicates to us other sources of trouble. While looking for Indians, the patrol was to observe who was absent from worship, to mark what the absentees were doing, and to give information to the authorities. These patrols were chosen from the leading men of the community—the most active, vigilant, and sensible—and it is conceivable that much ill-will might have been accumulated in the hearts of, not only the ne’er-do-weels, but timid and jealous and angry persons who were uneasy under this sabbath inspection. Such ill-will had its day of triumph when the Salem Tragedy arrived at its catastrophe.

The ordinary experience of life was singularly accelerated in that new state of society, though in the one particular of the age attained by the primitive adventurers, the community may be regarded as favoured. Death made a great sweep of the patriarchs at last—shortly before the Tragedy—but an unusual proportion of elders presided over social affairs for seventy years after the date of the second charter. The chief seats in the meeting-house were filled by grey-haired men and women, rich or poor as might happen; and they were allowed to retain their places, whoever else might be shifted in the yearly ‘seating.’ The title ‘Landlord’ distinguished the most dignified, and the eldest in each family of the ‘Old Planters;’ a ‘Goodman’ and ‘Goodwife’ (abbreviated to ‘Goody’) were titles of honour, as signifying heads of households. The old

age of these venerable persons was carefully cherished; and when, as could not but happen, many of them departed near together, the mourning of the community was deep and bitter. Society seemed to be deprived of its parents, and in fear and grief it anticipated the impending calamity. Except in regard to these patriarchs, and their long old age, the pace of events was very rapid. Early marriages might be looked for in a society so youthful; but the rapid succession of second and subsequent marriages is a striking feature in the register. The most devoted affection seems to have had no effect in deferring a second marriage so long as a year. No time was lost in settling in life at first; families were large; and half-brothers and sisters abounded; and as they grew up they married on the portions which were given them, as a matter of course,—each having house, land, and plenishing, till at last the parents gave away all but a sufficiency for their own need or convenience, and went into the town or remained in the central mansion, turning over the land and its cares to the younger generation. When there was a failure of offspring, the practice of adoption seems to have been resorted to almost as a natural process, which, in such a state of society, it probably was.

In the early days of the arts of life it is usual for the separate transactions of each day to be slow and cumbrous; but the experience of life may be rapid nevertheless. While travelling was a rough jogtrot, and forest-land took years to clear, and the harvest weeks to gather, property grew fast, marriages were precipitate and repeated, one generation trod on the heels of another, and the old folks complained that The Enemy made rapid conquest of the new territory which they had hoped he could not enter. When any work—of house-building, or harvesting, or nutting, or furnishing, or raising the wood-pile—had to be done, it was secured by assembling all the hands in the neighbourhood, and turning the toil into a festive pleasure. We have all read of such ‘bees’ in the rural districts of America down to the present day; and we can easily understand how the ‘goodmen’ and ‘goodies’ watched for the good and the evil which came out of such celebrations—the courtship and marriage, and the neighbourly interest and good offices on the one hand, and the evil passions from disappointed hopes, envy, jealousy, tittle-tattle, rash judgments, and slander, on the other. Much that was said, done, and inferred in such meetings as these found its way long afterwards into the Tragedy at Salem. Mr. Upham

side of the young social life of which the



inquisitorial meeting-house and the courts were the black shadow:—

‘The people of the early colonial settlements had a private and interior life, as much as we have now, and the people of all ages and countries have had. It is common to regard them in no other light than as a severe, sombre, and pleasure-abhorring generation. It was not so with them altogether. They had the same nature that we have. It was not all gloom and severity. They had their recreations, amusements, gaieties, and frolics. Youth was as buoyant with hope and gladness, love as warm and tender, mirth as natural to innocence, wit as sprightly, then as now. There was as much poetry and romance; the merry laugh enlivened the newly opened fields, and rang through the bordering woods as loud, jocund, and unrestrained as in these older and more crowded settlements. It is true that their theology was austere, and their polity, in Church and State, stern; but, in their modes of life, there were some features which gave peculiar opportunity to exercise and gratify a love of social excitement of a pleasurable kind.’ (Vol. i. p. 200.)

Except such conflicts as arose about the boundaries of estates when the General Court was remiss in making and enforcing its decisions, the first and gravest strifes related to Church matters and theological doctrines. The Farmers had more lively minds, better informed as to law, and more exercised in reasoning and judging than their class are usually supposed to have; for there never was a time when lawsuits were not going forward about the area and the rights of some landed property or other; and intelligent men were called on to make depositions, to serve on juries, and to follow the course of litigation, if not to serve the community in office. Thus they were prepared for the strife when the question of the two Churches pressed for settlement.

The Farmers in the rural district thenceforward to be called ‘Salem Village,’ desired to have a Meeting-house and a Minister of their own; but the town authorities insisted on taxing them for the religious establishment in Salem, from which they derived no benefit. In 1670, twenty of them petitioned to be set off as a parish, and allowed to provide a minister for themselves. In two years more the petition was granted, as a compromise for larger privileges; but there were restrictions which spoiled the grace of such concession as there was. One of these restrictions was that no minister was to be permanently settled without the permission of the old Church to proceed to his ordination. Endless trouble arose out of this provision. The men who had contributed the land, labour, and material for the Meeting-house, and the maintenance for the pastor, naturally desired to be free in their choice of their minister,

while the Church authorities in Salem considered themselves responsible for the maintenance of true doctrine, and for leaving no opening for Satan to enter the fold in the form of heresy, or any kind or degree of dissent. Their fathers, the first settlers, had made the colony too hot for one of their most virtuous and distinguished citizens, because he had views of his own on Infant Baptism; they had brought him to judgment, magistrate and church member as he was, for not having presented his infant child at the font; he had sold his estates and gone away. If such a citizen as Townsend Bishop was thus lost to their society, how could the guardians of religion surrender their control over any church or pastor within their reach? They had spiritual charge of a community which had made its abode on the American shore for the single purpose of living its own religious life in its own way; and no dissent or modification from within could be permitted, any more than intrusion or molestation from without. Between the ecclesiastical view on the one hand, and the civil view on the other, there was small chance of harmony between town and village, or between pastor, flock, and the overseers of both. The great point on which they were all agreed was that they were all in special danger from the extremest malice of Satan, who, foiled in Puritan England, was bent on revenge in America, and was visibly and audibly present in the settlement, seeking whom he might devour.

Quarrelling began with the appearance of the first minister, a young Mr. Bayley, who was appointed from year to year, but never ordained the pastor, till 1679, when the authorities at Salem tried to force him upon the people at Salem Village in the face of a strong opposition. The Farmers disregarded the orders issued from the town, and managed their religious affairs by general meetings of their own congregation; and at length Mr. Bayley retired, leaving the society in a much worse temper than he had found on his arrival. A handsome gift of land was settled upon him, in acknowledgment of his services; he quitted the ministry, and practised medicine in Roxbury till his death, nearly thirty years afterwards.

His partisans were enemies of his successor, of course. Mr. Burroughs was a man of even distinguished excellence in the pastoral relation, in days when risks from Indians made that duty as perilous as the career of the soldier in war time; but his flock were divided, church business was neglected, he was allowed to fall into want. He withdrew, was recalled to settle accounts, was arrested for debt in full meeting—the debt being



for the funeral expenses of his wife—was absolved from all blame under the cruel neglect he had experienced—and left the Village. Before he could hear in his remote home in Maine what was doing at Salem in the first days of the Witch Tragedy, he was summoned to his old neighbourhood, was charged with sorcery on the most childish and absurd testimony conceivable, and executed in August 1692. One of the witnesses—a young girl morbid in body and mind—poured out her remorse to him, the day before his death. He, believing her a victim of Satan, forgave her, prayed with her, and died honoured and beloved by all who were not under the curse of the bigotry of the time.

The third minister was one Deodat Lawson who is notable—beside his learning—for his Sermon on the Devil, and for some mournful mystery about his end. Of his last days there is nothing known but that there was something woeful in them; but his sermon, preached at the commencement of the outbreak in Salem, remains to us. It was published in America, and then widely circulated in England. It met the popular craving for light about Satan and his doings; and thus, between its appropriateness to the time and occasion, and the learning and ability which it manifested, it produced an extraordinary effect in its day. In ours it is an instructive evidence of the extent to which ‘knowledge falsely so called’ may operate on the mind of society, in the absence of science, and before the time has arrived for a clear understanding of the nature of knowledge and the conditions of its attainment. Mr. Lawson bore a part in the Salem Tragedy, and then went to England, where we hear of him from Calamy as ‘the unhappy Mr. Deodat ‘Lawson,’ and he disappears.

The fourth and last of the ministers of Salem Village, before the Tragedy, was the Mr. Parris, who played the most conspicuous part in it. He must have been a man of singular shamelessness, as well as remarkable selfishness, craft, ruthlessness, and withal imprudence. He began his operations with sharp bargaining about his stipend, and sharp practice in appropriating the house and land assigned for the use of successive pastors. He wrought diligently under the stimulus of his ambition till he got his meeting-house sanctioned as a true church, and himself ordained as the first pastor of Salem Village. This was in 1689. He immediately launched out into such an exercise of priestly power as could hardly be exceeded under any form of church government; he set his people by the ears on every possible occasion, and on every possible pretence; he made his church a scandal in the

land for its brawls and controversies; and on him rests the responsibility of the disease and madness which presently turned his parish into a hell, and made it famous for the murder of the wisest, gentlest, and purest Christians it contained.

Before we look at his next proceeding, however, we must bring into view one or two facts essential to the understanding of the case. We have already observed on the universality of the belief in the ever-present agency of Satan in that region and that special season. In the woods the Red Men were his agents—living in and for his service and his worship. In the open country, Satan himself was seen, as a black horse, as a black dog, as a tall, dark stranger, as a raven, a wolf, a cat, &c. Strange incidents happened there as everywhere—odd bodily affections and mental movements; and when devilish influences are watched for, they are sure to be seen. Everybody was prepared for manifestations of witchcraft from the first landing in the Bay; and there had been more and more cases, not only rumoured but brought under investigation, for some years before the final outbreak.

This suggests the next consideration: that the generation concerned had no alternative explanation within their reach, when perplexed by unusual appearances or actions of body or mind. They believed themselves perfectly certain about the Devil and his doings; and his agency was the only solution of their difficulties, while it was a very complete one. They thought they knew that his method of working was by human agents, whom he had won over and bound to his service. They had all been brought up to believe this; and they never thought of doubting it. The very conception of science had then scarcely begun to be formed in the minds of the wisest men of the time; and if it had been, who was there to suggest that the handful of pulp contained in the human skull, and the soft string of marrow in the spine, and cobweb lines of nerves, apparently of no more account than the hairs of the head, could transmit thoughts, emotions, passions—all the scenery of the spiritual world! For two hundred years more there was no effectual recognition of anything of the sort. At the end of those two centuries anatomists themselves were slicing the brain like a turnip, to see what was inside it,—not dreaming of the leading facts of its structure, nor of the inconceivable delicacy of its organisation. After half a century of knowledge of the main truth in regard to the brain, and nearly that period of study of its organisation by every established medical authority in the civilised world, we are still perplexed and baffled at every turn of the inquiry into the relations of body



and mind. How then can we make sufficient allowance for the effects of ignorance in a community where theology was the main interest in life, where science was yet unborn, and where all the influences of the period concurred to produce and aggravate superstitions and bigotries which now seem scarcely credible?

There had been misery enough caused by prosecutions for witchcraft within living memory to have warned Mr. Parris, one would think, how he carried down his people into those troubled waters again; but at that time such trials were regarded by society as trials for murder are by us, and not as anything surprising except from the degree of wickedness. William Penn presided at the trial of two Swedish women in Philadelphia for this gravest of crimes; and it was only by the accident of a legal informality that they escaped, the case being regarded with about the same feeling as we experienced a year or two ago when the murderess of infants, Charlotte Winsor, was saved from hanging by a doubt of the law. If the crime spread—as it usually did—the municipal governments issued an order for a day of fasting and humiliation, ‘in consideration of the extent to which Satan prevails amongst us in respect of witchcraft.’ Among the prosecutions which followed on such observances there was one here and there which turned out, too late, to have been a mistake. This kind of discovery might be made an occasion for more fasting and humiliation; but it seems to have had no effect in inducing caution, or suggesting self-distrust. Mr. Parris and his partisans must have been aware that on occasion of the last great spread of witchcraft, the magistrates and the general court had set aside the verdict of the jury in one case of wrongful accusation, and that there were other instances in which the general heart and conscience were cruelly wounded and oppressed, under the conviction that the wisest and saintliest woman in the community had been made away with by malice, at least as much as mistaken zeal. The wife of one of the most honoured and prominent citizens of Boston, and the sister of the Deputy Governor of Massachusetts, Mrs. Hibbins, might have been supposed safe from the gallows, while she walked in uprightness, and all holiness and gentleness of living. But her husband died; and the pack of fanatics sprang upon her, and tore her to pieces—name and fame, fortune, life, and everything. She was hanged in 1656, and the Farmers of Salem Village and their pastor were old enough to know, in Mr. Parris’s time, how ‘the famous Mr. Norton,’ an eminent pastor, ‘once said at his own table’—

before clergymen and elders—‘that one of their magistrates’ wives was hanged for a witch, only for having more wit than her neighbours;’ and to be aware that in Boston ‘a deep feeling of resentment’ against her persecutors rankled in the minds of some of the citizens; and that they afterwards ‘observed solemn marks of Providence set upon those who were very forward to condemn her.’ The story of Mrs. Hibbins, as told in the book before us, with the brief and simple comment of her own pleading in court, and the codicil to her will, is so piteous, and so fearful, that it is difficult to imagine how any clergyman could countenance a similar procedure before the memory of the execution had died out, and could be supported in his course by officers of his church, and at length by the leading clergy of the district, the magistrates, the physicians, ‘and devout women, not a few.’

In the interval between the execution of Mrs. Hibbins and the outbreak at Salem, an occasional breeze arose against some unpopular member of society. If a man’s ox was ill, if the beer ran out of the cask, if the butter would not come in the churn, if a horse shied or was restless when this or that man or woman was in sight; and if a woman knew when her neighbours were talking about her (which was Mrs. Hibbins’s most indisputable proof of connexion with the Devil), rumours got about of Satanic intercourse; men and women made deposition that six or seven years before, they had seen the suspected person yawn in church, and had observed a ‘devil’s teat,’ distinctly visible under his tongue; and children told of bears coming to them in the night, and of a buzzing devil in the humble-bee; and of a cat on the bed, thrice as big as an ordinary cat. But the authorities, on occasion, exercised some caution. They fined one accused person for telling a lie, instead of treating his bragging as inspiration of the Devil. They induced timely confession, or discovered flaws in the evidence, as often as they could; so that there was less disturbance in the immediate neighbourhood than in some other parts of the province. Where the Reverend Mr. Parris went, however, there was no more peace and quiet, no more privacy in the home, no more harmony in the church, no more goodwill or good manners in society.

As soon as he was ordained he put perplexing questions about Baptism before the Farmers, who rather looked to him for guidance in such matters than expected to be exercised in theological mysteries which they had never studied. He exposed to the congregation the spiritual conflicts of individual members who were too humble for their own comfort. He



preached and prayed incessantly about his own wrongs and the slights he suffered, in regard to his salary and supplies; and entered satirical notes in the margin of the church records; so that he was as abundantly discussed from house to house, and from end to end of his parish, as he himself could have desired. In the very crisis of the discontent, and when his little world was expecting to see him dismissed, he saved himself, as we ourselves have of late seen other persons relieve themselves under stress of mind and circumstances, by a rush into the world of spirits.

Four years previously, a poor immigrant, a Catholic Irishwoman, had been hanged in Boston for bewitching four children, named Goodwin—one of whom, a girl of thirteen, had sorely tried a reverend man, less irascible than Mr. Parris, but nearly as excitable. The tricks that the little girl played the Reverend Cotton Mather, when he endeavoured to exorcise the evil spirit, are precisely such as are familiar to us, in cases which are common in the practice of every physician. If we cannot pretend to explain them—in the true sense of explaining—that is, referring them to an ascertained law of nature, we know what to look for under certain conditions, and are aware that it is the brain and nervous system that is implicated in these phenomena, and not the Prince of Darkness and his train. Cotton Mather had no alternative at his disposal. Satan or nothing was his only choice. He published the story, with all its absurd details; and it was read in almost every house in the province. At Salem it wrought with fatal effect, because there was a pastor close by well qualified to make the utmost mischief out of it.

Mr. Parris had lived in the West Indies for some years, and had brought several slaves with him to Salem. One of these, an Indian named John, and Tituba his wife, seem to have been full of the gross superstitions of their people, and of the frame and temperament best adapted for the practices of demonology. In such a state of affairs, the pastor actually formed, or allowed to be formed, a society of young girls between the ages of eight and eighteen to meet in his parsonage, strongly resembling those ‘circles’ in the America of our time which have filled the lunatic asylums with thousands of victims of ‘spiritualist’ visitations. It seems that these young persons were labouring under strong nervous excitement, which was encouraged rather than repressed by the means employed by their spiritual director. Instead of treating them as the subjects of morbid delusions, Mr. Parris regarded them as the victims of external diabolical influence; and this influence was,

strangely enough, supposed to be exercised, on the evidence of the children themselves, by some of the most pious and respectable members of the community.

We need not describe the course of events. In the dull life of the country, the excitement of the proceedings in the 'circle' was welcome, no doubt; and it was always on the increase. Whatever trickery there might be—and no doubt there was plenty; whatever incitement to hysteria, whatever actual sharpening of common faculties, it is clear that there was more; and those who have given due and dispassionate attention to the processes of mesmerism and their effects can have no difficulty in understanding the reports handed down of what these young creatures did, and said, and saw, under peculiar conditions of the nervous system. When the physicians of the district could see no explanation of the ailments of 'the afflicted children' but 'the evil hand,' no doubt could remain to those who consulted them of these agonies being the work of Satan. The matter was settled at once. But Satan can work only through human agents; and who were his instruments for the affliction of these children? Here was the opening through which calamity rushed in; and for half a year this favoured corner of the godly land of New England was turned into a hell. The more the children were stared at and pitied, the bolder they grew in their vagaries, till at last they broke through the restraints of public worship, and talked nonsense to the minister in the pulpit, and profaned the prayers. Mr. Parris assembled all the divines he could collect at his parsonage, and made his troop go through their performances—the result of which was a general groan over the manifest presence of the Evil One, and a passionate intercession for 'the afflicted children.'

The first step towards their relief was to learn who it was that had stricken them; and the readiest means that occurred was to ask this question of the children themselves! At first, they named no names, or what they said was not disclosed; but there was soon an end of all such delicacy. The first symptoms had occurred in November 1691; and the first public examination of witches took place on the 1st of March following. We shall cite as few of the cases as will suffice for our purpose; for they are exceedingly painful; and there is something more instructive for us in the spectacle of the consequences, and in the suggestions of the story, than in the scenery of persecution and murder.

In the first group of accused persons was one Sarah Good, a weak, ignorant, poor, despised woman, whose equally weak



and ignorant husband had forsaken her, and left her to the mercy of evil tongues. He had called her an enemy to all good, and had said that if she was not a witch, he feared she would be one shortly. Her assertions under examination were that she knew nothing about the matter; that she had hurt nobody, nor employed anybody to hurt another; that she served God; and that the God she served was He who made heaven and earth. It appears, however, that she believed in the reality of the 'affliction;' for she ended by accusing a fellow-prisoner of having hurt the children. The report of the examination, noted at the time by two of the heads of the congregation, is inane and silly beyond belief; yet the celebration was unutterably solemn to the assembled crowd of fellow-worshippers; and it sealed the doom of the community, in regard to peace and good repute.

Mrs. Good was carried to jail. Not long after her little daughter Dorcas, aged four years, was apprehended at the suit of the brothers Putnam, chief citizens of Salem. There was plenty of testimony produced of bitings and chokings and pinchings, inflicted by this infant; and she was committed to prison, and probably, as Mr. Upham says, fettered with the same chains which bound her mother. Nothing short of chains could keep witches from flying away; and they were chained at the cost of the State, when they could not pay for their own irons. As these poor creatures were friendless and poverty-stricken, it is some comfort to find the gaoler charging for 'two blankets for Sarah Good's child,' costing ten shillings.

What became of little Dorcas, with her healthy looks and natural childlike spirits, noticed by her accusers, we do not learn. Her mother lay in chains till the 29th of June, when she was brought out to receive sentence. She was hanged on the 19th of July, after having relieved her heart by vehement speech of some of the passion which weighed upon it. She does not seem to have been capable of much thought. One of the accusers was convicted of a flagrant lie, in the act of giving testimony; but the narrator, Hutchinson, while giving the fact, treats it as of no consequence, because Sir Matthew Hale and the jury of his court were satisfied with the condemnation of a witch, under precisely the same circumstances. The parting glimpse we have of this first victim is dismally true on the face of it. It is most characteristic.

'Sarah Good appears to have been an unfortunate woman, having been subject to poverty, and consequent sadness and melancholy. But she was not wholly broken in spirit. Mr. Noyes, at the time

of her execution, urged her very strenuously to confess. Among other things, he told her "she was a witch, and that she knew she was a witch." She was conscious of her innocence, and felt that she was oppressed, outraged, trampled upon, and about to be murdered, under the forms of law; and her indignation was roused against her persecutors. She could not bear in silence the cruel aspersion; and although she was just about to be launched into eternity, the torrent of her feelings could not be restrained, but burst upon the head of him who uttered the false accusation. "You are a liar," said she. "I am no more a witch than you are a wizard; and, if you take away my life, God will give you blood to drink." Hutchinson says that, in his day, there was a tradition among the people of Salem, and it has descended to the present time, that the manner of Mr. Noyes's death strangely verified the prediction thus wrung from the incensed spirit of the dying woman. He was exceedingly corpulent, of a plethoric habit, and died of an internal hæmorrhage, bleeding profusely at the mouth.' (Vol. ii. p. 269.)

When she had been in her grave nearly twenty years, her representatives—little Dorcas perhaps for one—were presented with 30*l.*, as a grant from the Crown, as compensation for the mistake of hanging her without reason and against evidence.

In the early part of the century, a devout family named Towne were living at Great Yarmouth, in the English county of Norfolk. About the time of the King's execution they emigrated to Massachusetts. William Towne and his wife carried with them two daughters; and another daughter and a son were born to them afterwards in Salem. The three daughters were baptised at long intervals, and the eldest, Rebecca, must have been at least twenty years older than Sarah, and a dozen or more years older than Mary. A sketch of the fate of these three sisters contains within it the history of a century.

On the map which Mr. Upham presents us with, one of the most conspicuous estates is an enclosure of 300 acres, which had a significant story of its own—too long for us to enter upon. We need only say that there had been many strifes about this property—fights about boundaries, and stripping of timber, and a series of lawsuits. Yet, from 1678 onwards, the actual residents in the mansion had lived in peace, taking no notice of wrangles which did not, under the conditions of purchase, affect them, but only the former proprietor. The frontispiece of Mr. Upham's book shows us what the mansion of an opulent landowner was like in the early days of the colony. It is the portrait of the house in which the eldest daughter of William Towne was living at the date of the Salem Tragedy.



Rebecca, then the aged wife of Francis Nurse, was a great-grandmother, and between seventy and eighty years of age. No old age could have had a more lovely aspect than hers. Her husband was, as he had always been, devoted to her, and the estate was a colony of sons and daughters, and their wives and husbands; for 'Landlord Nurse' had divided his land between his four sons and three sons-in-law, and had built homesteads for them all as they married and settled. Mrs. Nurse was in full activity of faculty, except being somewhat deaf from age; and her health was good, except for certain infirmities of long standing, which it required the zeal and the malice of such a divine as Mr. Parris to convert into 'devil's marks.' As for her repute in the society of which she was the honoured head, we learn what it was by the testimony supplied by forty persons—neighbours and householders—who were inquired of in regard to their opinion of her in the day of her sore trial. Some of them had known her above forty years; they had seen her bring up a large family in uprightness; they had remarked the beauty of her Christian profession and conduct; and had never heard or observed any evil of her. This was Rebecca, the eldest.

The next, Mary, was now fifty-eight years old, the wife of 'Goodman Easty,' the owner of a large farm. She had seven children, and was living in ease and welfare of every sort when overtaken by the same calamity as her sister Nurse. Sarah, the youngest, had married twice. Her present husband was Peter Cloyse, whose name occurs in the parish records, and in various depositions which show that he was a prominent citizen. When Mr. Parris was publicly complaining of neglect in respect of firewood for the parsonage, and of lukewarmness on the part of the hearers of his services, 'Landlord Nurse' was a member of the committee who had to deal with him; and his relatives were probably among the majority who were longing for Mr. Parris's apparently inevitable departure. In these circumstances, it was not altogether surprising that 'the afflicted children' trained in the parsonage parlour ventured, after their first successes, to name the honoured 'Goody Nurse' as one of the allies lately acquired by Satan. They saw her here, there, and everywhere, when she was sitting quietly at home; they saw her biting the black servants, choking, pinching, pricking women and children; and if she was examined, devil's marks would doubtless be found upon her. She *was* examined by a jury of her own sex. Neither the testimony of her sisters and daughters as to her infirmities, nor the disgust of decent neighbours, nor the commonest suggestions of reason and feeling, availed to

save her from the injury of being reported to have what the witnesses were looking for.

We have a glimpse of her in her home when the first conception of her impending fate opened upon her. Four esteemed persons, one of whom was her brother-in-law, Mr. Cloyse, made the following deposition, in the prospect of the victim being dragged before the public:—

‘ We whose names are underwritten being desired to go to Goodman Nurse, his house, to speak with his wife, and to tell her that several of the afflicted persons mentioned her; and accordingly we went, and we found her in a weak and low condition in body as she told us, and had been sick almost a week. And we asked how it was otherwise with her; and she said she blessed God for it, she had more of his presence in this sickness than sometime she have had, but not so much as she desired; but she would, with the apostle, press forward to the mark: and many other places of Scripture to the like purpose. And then of her own accord she began to speak of the affliction that was amongst them, and in particular of Mr. Parris his family, and how she was grieved for them, though she had not been to see them, by reason of fits that she formerly used to have; for people said it was awful to behold: but she pitied them with all her heart, and went to God for them. But she said she heard that there was persons spoke of that were as innocent as she was, she believed; and after much to this purpose, we told her we heard that she was spoken of also. “Well,” she said, “if it be so, the will of the Lord be done:” she sat still awhile, being as it were amazed; and then she said, “Well, as to this thing I am as innocent as the child unborn; but surely,” she said, “what sin hath God found out in me unrepented of, that he should lay such an affliction upon me in my old age?” and, according to our best observation, we could not discern that she knew what we came for before we told her.

‘ ISRAEL PORTER,

‘ ELIZABETH PORTER,

DANIEL ANDREW,

PETER CLOYSE.’

On the 22nd of March, she was brought into the thronged meeting-house to be accused before the magistrates, and to answer as she best could. We must pass over those painful pages, where nonsense, spasms of hysteria, new and strange to their Worships, cunning, cruelty, blasphemy, indecency turned the house of prayer into a hell for the time. The aged woman could explain nothing. She simply asserted her innocence, and supposed that some evil spirit was at work. One thing more she could do—she could endure with calmness malice and injustice, which are too much for our composure at a distance of nearly two centuries. She felt the *animus* of her enemies, and she pointed out how they perverted whatever she said;



but no impatient word escaped her. She was evidently as perplexed as anybody present. When weary and disheartened, and worn out with the noise and the numbers and the hysterics of the ‘afflicted,’ her head drooped on one shoulder. Immediately all the ‘afflicted’ had twisted necks, and rude hands seized her head to set it upright, ‘lest other necks should be broken ‘by her ill offices.’ Everything went against her, and the result was what had been hoped by the agitators. The venerable matron was carried to jail, and put in irons.

Now Mr. Parris’s time had arrived, and he broadly accused her of murder, employing for the purpose a fitting instrument—Mrs. Ann Putnam, the mother of one of the afflicted children, and herself of highly nervous temperament, undisciplined mind, and absolute devotedness to her pastor. Her deposition, preceded by a short one of Mr. Parris, will show the quality of the evidence on which judicial murder was inflicted:—

‘Mr. Parris gave in a deposition against her; from which it appears, that, a certain person being sick, Mercy Lewis was sent for. She was struck dumb on entering the chamber. She was asked to hold up her hand, if she saw any of the witches afflicting the patient. Presently she held up her hand, then fell into a trance; and after a while, coming to herself, said that she saw the spectre of Goody Nurse and Goody Carrier having hold of the head of the sick man. Mr. Parris swore to this statement with the utmost confidence in Mercy’s declarations.’ (Vol. ii. p. 275.)

“The deposition of Ann Putnam, the wife of Thomas Putnam, aged about thirty years, who testifieth and saith, that on March 18, 1692, I being wearied out in helping to tend my poor afflicted child and maid, about the middle of the afternoon I lay me down on the bed to take a little rest; and immediately I was almost pressed and choked to death, that had it not been for the mercy of a gracious God and the help of those that were with me, I could not have lived many moments; and presently I saw the apparition of Martha Corey, who did torture me so as I cannot express, ready to tear me all to pieces, and then departed from me a little while; but, before I could recover strength or well take breath, the apparition of Martha Corey fell upon me again with dreadful tortures, and hellish temptation to go along with her. And she also brought to me a little red book in her hand and a black pen, urging me vehemently to write in her book; and several times that day she did most grievously torture me, almost ready to kill me. And on the 19th of March, Martha Corey again appeared to me; and also Rebecca Nurse, the wife of Francis Nurse Sr.; and they both did torture me a great many times this day with such tortures as no tongue can express, because I would not yield to their hellish temptations, that, had I not been upheld by an Almighty arm, I could not have lived while night.

The 20th March, being Sabbath-day, I had a great deal of respite between my fits. 21st of March being the day of the examination of Martha Corey, I had not many fits, though I was very weak ; my strength being, as I thought, almost gone : but, on 22nd of March, 1692, the apparition of Rebecca Nurse did again set upon me in a most dreadful manner, very early in the morning, as soon as it was well light. And now she appeared to me only in her shift, and brought a little red book in her hand, urging me vehemently to write in her book ; and, because I would not yield to her hellish temptations, she threatened to tear my soul out of my body, blasphemously denying the blessed God, and the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to save my soul ; and denying several places of Scripture, which I told her of, to repel her hellish temptations. And for near two hours together, at this time, the apparition of Rebecca Nurse did tempt and torture me, and also the greater part of this day, with but very little respite. 23rd of March, am again afflicted by the apparitions of Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey, but chiefly by Rebecca Nurse. 24th of March, being the day of the examination of Rebecca Nurse, I was several times afflicted in the morning by the apparition of Rebecca Nurse, but most dreadfully tortured by her in the time of her examination, insomuch that the honoured magistrates gave my husband leave to carry me out of the meeting-house ; and, as soon as I was carried out of the meeting-house doors, it pleased Almighty God, for his free grace and mercy's sake, to deliver me out of the paws of those roaring lions, and jaws of those tearing bears, that, ever since that time, they have not had power so to afflict me until this May 31, 1692. At the same moment that I was hearing my evidence read by the honoured magistrates, to take my oath, I was again re-assaulted and tortured by my before-mentioned tormentor, Rebecca Nurse." "The testimony of Ann Putnam Jr. witnesseth and saith, that, being in the room where her mother was afflicted, she saw Martha Corey, Sarah Cloyse, and Rebecca Nurse, or their apparition, upon her mother."

'Mrs. Ann Putnam made another deposition under oath at the same trial, which shows that she was determined to overwhelm the prisoner by the multitude of her charges. She says that Rebecca Nurse's apparition declared to her that "she had killed Benjamin Houlton, John Fuller, and Rebecca Shepard ;" and that she and her sister Cloyse, and Edward Bishop's wife, had killed young John Putnam's child ; and she further deposed as followeth :—"Immediately there did appear to me six children in winding-sheets, which called me aunt, which did most grievously affright me ; and they told me that they were my sister Baker's children of Boston ; and that Goody Nurse, and Mistress Corey of Charlestown, and an old deaf woman at Boston, had murdered them, and charged me to go and tell these things to the magistrates, or else they would tear me to pieces, for their blood did cry for vengeance. Also there appeared to me my own sister Bayley and three of her children in winding-sheets, and told me that Goody Nurse had murdered them."'

(Vol. ii. p. 278.)



All the efforts made to procure testimony against the venerable gentlewoman's character issued in a charge that she had so 'railed at' a neighbour for allowing his pigs to get into her field that, some short time after, early in the morning, he had a sort of fit in his own entry, and languished in health from that day, and died in a fit at the end of the summer. 'He departed this life by a cruel death,' murdered by Goody Nurse. The jury did not consider this ground enough for hanging the old lady, who had been the ornament of their church, and the glory of their village and its society. Their verdict was 'Not Guilty.' Not for a moment, however, could the prisoner and her family hope that their trial was over. The outside crowd clamoured; the 'afflicted' howled and struggled; one judge declared himself dissatisfied; another promised to have her indicted anew; and the Chief Justice pointed out a phrase of the prisoner's which might be made to signify that she was one of the accused gang in guilt, as well as in jeopardy. It might really seem as if the authorities were all drivelling together when we see the ingenuity and persistence with which they discussed those three words, 'of our company.' Her remonstrance ought to have moved them:—

'I intended no otherwise than as they were prisoners with us, and therefore did then, and yet do, judge them not legal evidence against their fellow-prisoners. And I being something hard of hearing and full of grief, none informing me how the Court took up my words, therefore had no opportunity to declare what I intended when I said they were of our company.' (Vol. ii. p. 285.)

The foreman of the jury would have taken the favourable view of this matter, and have allowed full consideration, while other jurymen were eager to recall the mistake of their verdict; but the prisoner's silence, from failing to hear when she was expected to explain, turned the foreman against her, and caused him to declare, 'whereupon these words were to me a principal evidence against her.' Still, it seemed too monstrous to hang her. After her condemnation, the Governor reprieved her; probably on the ground of the illegality of setting aside the first verdict of the jury, in the absence of any new evidence. But the outcry against mercy was so fierce that the Governor withdrew his reprieve.

On the next Sunday, there was a scene in the church, the record of which was afterwards annotated by the church members in a spirit of grief and humiliation. After sacrament the elders propounded to the church, and the congregation unanimously agreed, that Sister Nurse, being convicted as a

witch by the court, should be excommunicated in the afternoon of the same day. The place was thronged; the reverend elders were in the pulpit; the deacons presided below; the sheriff and his officers brought in the witch, and led her up the broad aisle, her chains clanking as she moved. As she stood in the middle of the aisle, the Reverend Mr. Noyes pronounced her sentence of expulsion from the Church on earth, and from all hope of salvation hereafter. As she had given her soul to Satan, she was delivered over to him for ever. She was aware that every eye regarded her with horror and hate, unapproached under any other circumstances; but it appears that she was able to sustain it. She was still calm and at peace on that day, and during the fortnight of final waiting. When the time came, she traversed the streets of Salem between houses in which she had been an honoured guest, and surrounded by well-known faces; and then there was the hard task, for her aged limbs, of climbing the rocky and steep path on Witches' Hill to the place where the gibbets stood in a row, and the hangman was waiting for her, and for Sarah Good, and several more of whom Salem chose to be rid that day. It was the 19th of July 1692. The bodies were put out of the way on the hill, like so many dead dogs; but this one did not remain there long. By pious hands it was—nobody knew when—brought home to the domestic cemetery, where the next generation pointed out the grave, next to her husband's, and surrounded by those of her children. As for her repute, Hutchinson, the historian, tells us that even excommunication could not permanently disgrace her. 'Her life and conversation had been such, that the remembrance thereof, in a short time after, wiped off all the reproach occasioned by the civil or ecclesiastical sentence against her.' (Vol. ii. p. 292.)

Thus much comfort her husband had till he died in 1695. In a little while none of his eight children remained unmarried, and he wound up his affairs. He gave over the homestead to his son Samuel, and divided all he had among the others, reserving only a mare and her saddle, some favourite articles of furniture, and 14*l.* a year, with a right to call on his children for any further amount that might be needful. He made no will, and his children made no difficulties, but tended his latter days, and laid him in his own ground, when at seventy-seven years old he died.

In 1711, the authorities of the Province, sanctioned by the Council of Queen Anne, proposed such reparation as their heart and conscience suggested. They made a grant to the representatives of Rebecca Nurse of 25*l.*! In the following



year, something better was done, on the petition of the son Samuel who inhabited the homestead. A church meeting was called; the facts of the excommunication of twenty years before were recited, and a reversal was proposed, ‘the General Court having taken off the attainder, and the testimony on which she was convicted being not now so satisfactory to ourselves and others as it was generally in that hour of darkness and temptation.’ The remorseful congregation blotted out the record in the church book, ‘humbly requesting that the merciful God would pardon whatsoever sin, error, or mistake was in the application of that censure, and of the whole affair, through our merciful High Priest, who knoweth how to have compassion on the ignorant, and those that are out of the way.’ (Vol. ii. p. 483.)

Such was the fate of Rebecca, the eldest of the three sisters. Mary, the next—once her playmate on the sands at Yarmouth, in the old country—was her companion to the last, in love and destiny. Mrs. Easty was arrested, with many other accused persons, on the 21st of April, while her sister was in jail in irons. The testimony against her was a mere repetition of the charges of torturing, strangling, pricking and pinching Mr. Parris’s young friends, and rendering them dumb, or blind, or mazed. Mrs. Easty was evidently so astonished and perplexed by the assertions of the children, that the magistrates inquired of the voluble witnesses whether they might not be mistaken. As they were positive, and Mrs. Easty could say only that she supposed it was ‘a bad spirit,’ but did not know ‘whether it was witchcraft or not,’ there was nothing to be done but to send her to prison and put her in irons. The next we hear of her is that on the 18th of May she was free. The authorities, it seems, would not detain her on such evidence as was offered. She was at large for two days, and no more. The convulsions and tortures of the children returned instantly, on the news being told of Goody Easty being abroad again; and the ministers, and elders, and deacons, and all the zealous antagonists of Satan went to work so vigorously to get up a fresh case, that they bore down all before them. Mercy Lewis was so near death under the hands of Mrs. Easty’s apparition that she was crying out ‘Dear Lord! receive my soul!’ and thus there was clearly no time to be lost; and this choking and convulsion, says an eminent citizen, acting as a witness, ‘occurred very often until such time as we understood Mary Easty was laid in irons.’

There she was lying when her sister Nurse was tried, excommunicated, and executed; and to the agony of all this

was added the arrest of her sister Sarah, Mrs. Cloyse. But she had such strength as kept her serene up to the moment of her death on the gibbet on the 22nd of September following. We would fain give, if we had room, the petition of the two sisters, Mrs. Easty and Mrs. Cloyse, to the court, when their trial was pending; but we can make room only for the last clause of its reasoning and remonstrance.

‘Thirdly, that the testimony of witches, or such as are afflicted as is supposed by witches, may not be improved to condemn us without other legal evidence concurring. We hope the honoured Court and jury will be so tender of the lives of such as we are, who have for many years lived under the unblemished reputation of Christianity, as not to condemn them without a fair and equal hearing of what may be said for us as well as against us. And your poor suppliants shall be bound always to pray, &c.’ (Vol. ii. p. 326.)

Still more affecting is the Memorial of Mrs. Easty when under sentence of death, and fully aware of the hopelessness of her case. She addresses the judges, the magistrates, and the reverend ministers, imploring them to consider what they are doing, and how far their course in regard to accused persons is consistent with the principles and rules of justice. She asks nothing for herself; she is satisfied with her own innocence, and certain of her doom on earth and her hope in heaven. What she desires is to induce the authorities to take time, to use caution in receiving, and strictness in sifting testimony; and so shall they ascertain the truth, and absolve the innocent, the blessing of God being upon their conscientious endeavours. We do not know of any effect produced by her warning and remonstrance; but we find her case estimated, twenty years afterwards, as meriting a compensation of 20*l*.! Before setting forth from the jail to the Witches’ Hill, on the day of her death, she serenely bade farewell to her husband, her many children, and her friends, some of whom related afterwards that ‘her sayings were as serious, religious, distinct, and affectionate as could well be expressed, drawing tears from the eyes of almost all present.’

The third of this family of dignified gentlewomen seems to have had a keener sensibility than her sisters, or a frame less strong to endure the shocks prepared and inflicted by the malice of the enemy. Some of the incidents of her implication in the great calamity are almost too moving to be dwelt on, even in a remote time and country. Mrs. Cloyse drew ill will upon herself at the outset by doing as her brother and sister Nurse did. They all absented themselves from the examin-



ations in the church, and, when the interruptions of the services became too flagrant, from Sabbath worship; and they said they took that course because they disapproved of the permission given to the profanation of the place and the service. They were communicants, and persons of consideration, both in regard to character and position; and their quiet disapprobation of the proceedings of the ministers and their company of accusers subjected them to the full fury of clerical wrath and womanish spite. When the first examination of Mrs. Nurse took place, Mrs. Cloyse was of course overwhelmed with horror and grief. The next Sunday, however, was Sacrament Sunday; and she and her husband considered it their duty to attend the ordinance. The effort to Mrs. Cloyse was so great that when Mr. Parris gave out his text ‘One of you is a devil. He spake of Judas Iscariot,’ &c., and when he opened his discourse with references in his special manner to the transactions of the week, the afflicted sister of the last victim could not endure the outrage. She left the meeting. There was a fresh wind, and the door slammed as she went out, fixing the attention of all present, just as Mr. Parris could have desired. She had not to wait long for the consequences. On the 4th of April she was apprehended with several others; and on the 11th her examination took place, the questions being framed to suit the evidence known to be forthcoming, and Mr. Parris being the secretary for the occasion. The witness in one case was asked whether she saw a company eating and drinking at Mr. Parris’s, and she replied, as expected, that she did. ‘What were they eating and drinking?’ Of course, it was the Devil’s sacrament; and Mr. Parris, by leading questions, brought out the testimony that about forty persons partook of that hell-sacrament, Mrs. Cloyse and Sarah Good being the two deacons! When accused of the usual practices of cruelty to these innocent suffering children, and to the ugly, hulking Indian slave, who pretended to show the marks of her teeth, Mrs. Cloyse gave some vent to her feelings. ‘When did I hurt thee?’ ‘A great many times,’ said the Indian. ‘O, you are a grievous liar!’ exclaimed she. But the wrath gave way under the soul-sickness which overcame her when charged with biting and pinching a black man, and throttling children, and serving their blood at the blasphemous supper. Her sisters in prison, her husband accused with her, and young girls—mere children—now manifesting a devilish cruelty to her, who had felt nothing but goodwill to them—she could not sustain herself before the assembly whose eyes were upon her. She sank down, calling for water. She

fainted on the floor, and some of the accusing children cried out, 'Oh! her spirit has gone to prison to her sister Nurse!' From that examination she was herself carried to prison.

When she joined her sister Easty in the petition to the Court in the next summer, she certainly had no idea of escaping the gallows; but it does not appear that she was ever brought to trial. Mr. Parris certainly never relented; for we find him from time to time torturing the feelings of this and every other family whom he supposed to be anything but affectionate to him. Some of the incidents would be almost incredible to us if they were not recorded in the church and parish books, in Mr. Parris's own distinct handwriting.

On the 14th of August, when the corpse of Rebecca Nurse was lying among the rocks on the Witches' Hill, and her two sisters were in irons in Boston jail (for Boston had now taken the affair out of the hands of the unaided Salem authorities), and his predecessor, Mr. Burroughs, was awaiting his execution, Mr. Parris invited his church members to remain after service to hear something that he had to say. He had to point out to the vigilance of the church that Samuel Nurse, the son of Rebecca, and his wife, and Peter Cloyse and certain others, of late had failed to join the brethren at the Lord's table, and had, except Samuel Nurse, rarely appeared at ordinary worship. These outraged and mourning relatives of the accused sisters were decreed to be visited by certain pious representatives of the church, and the reason of their absence to be demanded. The minister, the two deacons, and a chief member were appointed to this fearful task. The report delivered in on the 31st of August, was:—

'Brother Tarbell proves sick, unmeet for discourse; Brother Cloyse hard to be found at home, being often with his wife in prison at Ipswich for witchcraft; and Brother Samuel Nurse, and sometimes his wife, attends our public meeting, and he the sacrament, 11th of September, 1692: upon all which we choose to wait further.' (Vol. ii. p. 486.)

This decision to pause was noted as the first token of the decline of the power of the ministers. Mr. Parris was sorely unwilling to yield even this much advantage to Satan—that is, to family affection and instinct of justice. But his position was further lowered by the departure from the parish of some of the most eminent members of its society. Mr. Cloyse never brought his family to the Village again, when his wife was once out of prison; and the name disappears from the history of Salem.

We have sketched the life of one family out of many, and



we will leave the rest for such of our readers as may choose to learn more. Some of the statements in the book before us disclose a whole family history in a few words; as the following, in relation to John Procter and his wife:—

‘The bitterness of the prosecutors against Procter was so vehement, that they not only arrested, and tried to destroy, his wife and all his family above the age of infancy, in Salem, but all her relatives in Lynn, many of whom were thrown into prison. The helpless children were left destitute, and the house swept of its provisions by the sheriff. Procter’s wife gave birth to a child, about a fortnight after his execution. This indicates to what alone she owed her life. John Procter had spoken so boldly against the proceedings, and all who had part in them, that it was felt to be necessary to put him out of the way.’ (Vol. ii. p. 312.)

The Rev. Mr. Noyes, the worthy coadjutor of Mr. Parris, refused to pray with Mr. Procter before his death, unless he would confess; and the more danger there seemed to be of a revival of pity, humility, and reason, the more zealous waxed the wrath of the pious pastors against the Enemy of Souls. When, on the fearful 22nd of September, Mr. Noyes stood looking at the execution, he exclaimed that it was a sad thing to see eight firebrands of hell hanging there! The spectacle was never seen again on Witches’ Hill.

The Jacobs family was signalised by the confession of one of its members—Margaret, one of the ‘afflicted’ girls. She brought her grandfather to the gallows, and suffered as much as a weak, ignorant, impressionable person under evil influences could suffer from doubt and remorse. But she married well seven years afterwards—still feeling enough in regard to the past to refuse to be married by Mr. Noyes. She deserved such peace of mind as she obtained, for she retracted the confession of witchcraft which she had made, and went to prison. It was too late then to save her victims, Mr. Burroughs and her grandfather, but she obtained their full and free forgiveness. At that time this was the condition of the family:—

‘No account has come to us of the deportment of George Jacobs, Sr., at his execution. As he was remarkable in life for the firmness of his mind, so he probably was in death. He had made his will before the delusion arose. It is dated January 29, 1692; and shows that he, like Procter, had a considerable estate. . . . In his infirm old age, he had been condemned to die for a crime of which he knew himself innocent, and which there is some reason to believe he did not think anyone capable of committing. He regarded the whole thing as a wicked conspiracy and absurd fabrication. He had to end his long life upon a scaffold in a week from that day. His house was desolated, and his property sequestered. His only

son, charged with the same crime, had eluded the sheriff—leaving his family, in the hurry of his flight, unprovided for—and was an exile in foreign lands. The crazy wife of that son was in prison and in chains, waiting trial on the same charge; her little children, including an unweaned infant, left in a deserted and destitute condition in the woods. The older children were scattered he knew not where, while one of them had completed the bitterness of his lot by becoming a confessor, upon being arrested with her mother as a witch. This granddaughter, Margaret, overwhelmed with fright and horror, bewildered by the statements of the accusers, and controlled probably by the arguments and arbitrary methods of address employed by her minister, Mr. Noyes—whose peculiar function in these proceedings seems to have been to drive persons accused to make confession—had been betrayed into that position, and became a confessor and accuser of others.’ (Vol. ii. p. 312.)

The life and death of a prominent citizen, Giles Corey, should not be altogether passed over in a survey of such a community and such a time. He had land, and was called ‘Goodman Corey;’ but he was unpopular from being too rough for even so young a state of society. He was once tried for the death of a man whom he had used roughly, but he was only fined. He had strifes and lawsuits with his neighbours; but he won three wives, and there was due affection between him and his children. He was eighty years old when the Witch Delusion broke out, and was living alone with his wife Martha—a devout woman, who spent much of her time on her knees, praying against the snares of Satan, that is, the delusion about witchcraft. She spoke freely of the tricks of the children, the blindness of the magistrates, and the falling away of many from common sense and the word of God; and, while her husband attended every public meeting, she stayed at home to pray. In his fanaticism he quarrelled with her, and she was at once marked out for a victim, and one of the earliest. When visited by examiners, she smiled, and conversed with entire composure, declaring that she was no witch, and that ‘she did not think that there were any witches.’ By such sayings, and by the expressions of vexation that fell from her husband, and the fanaticism of two of her four sons-in-law, she was soon brought to extremity. But her husband was presently under accusation too; and much amazed he evidently was at his position. His wife was one of the eight ‘firebrands of hell’ whom Mr. Noyes saw swung off on the 22nd of September. ‘Martha Corey,’ said the record, ‘protesting her innocence, concluded her life with an eminent prayer on the scaffold.’ Her husband had been supposed certain to die in the same way; but he had chosen a different one. His anguish at his rash folly at the



outset of the delusion excited the strongest desire to bear testimony on behalf of his wife and other innocent persons, and to give an emphatic blessing to the two sons-in-law who had been brave and faithful in his wife's cause. He executed a deed by which he presented his excellent children with his property in honour of their mother's memory; and, aware that if tried he would be condemned and executed, and his property forfeited, he resolved not to plead, and to submit to the consequence of standing mute. Old as he was, he endured it. He stood mute, and the court had, as the authorities believed, no alternative. He was pressed to death, as devoted husbands and fathers were, here and there, in the Middle Ages, when they chose to save their families from the consequences of attainder by dying untried. We will not sicken our readers with the details of the slow, cruel, and disgusting death. He bore it, only praying for heavier weights to shorten his agony. Such a death and such a testimony, and the execution of his wife two days later, weighed on every heart in the community; and no revival of old charges against the rough colonist had any effect in the presence of such an act as his last. He was long believed to haunt the places where he lived and died; and the attempt made by the ministers and one of their 'afflicted' agents to impress the church and society with a vision which announced his damnation, was a complete failure. Cotton Mather showed that Ann Putnam had received a divine communication, proving Giles Corey a murderer; and Ann Putnam's father laid the facts before the judge; but it was too late now for visions, and for insinuations to the judges, and for clerical agitation to have any success. Brother Noyes hurried on a church meeting while Giles Corey was actually lying under the weights, to excommunicate him for witchcraft on the one hand, or suicide on the other; and the ordinance was passed. But it was of no avail against the rising tide of reason and sympathy. This was the last vision, and the last attempt to establish one in Salem, if not in the Province. It remained for Mr. Noyes, and the Mathers, and Mr. Parris, and every clergyman concerned, to endure the popular hatred and their own self-questioning for the rest of their days. The lay authorities were stricken with remorse and humbled with grief: but their share of the retribution was more endurable than that of the pastors who had proved so wolfish towards their flocks.

In that month of September 1692, they believed themselves in the thick of 'the fight between the Devil and the Lamb.' Cotton Mather was nimble and triumphant on the Witches'

Hill whenever there were 'firebrands of hell' swinging there; and they all hoped to do much good work for the Lord yet, for they had lists of suspected persons in their pockets, who must be brought into the courts month by month, and carted off to the Hill. One of the gayest and most complacent letters on the subject of this 'fight' in the correspondence of Cotton Mather is dated on the 20th of September 1692, within a month of the day when he was improving the occasion at the foot of the gallows where the former pastor, Rev. George Burroughs, and four others were hung. In the interval fifteen more received sentence of death; Giles Corey had died his fearful death the day before; and in two days after, Corey's widow and seven more were hanged. Mather, Noyes, and Parris had no idea that these eight would be the last. But so it was. Thus far, one only had escaped after being made sure of in the courts. The married daughter of a clergyman had been condemned, was reprieved by the Governor, and was at last discharged on the ground of the insufficiency of the evidence. Henceforth, after that fearful September day, no evidence was found sufficient. The accusers had grown too audacious in their selection of victims; their clerical patrons had become too openly determined to give no quarter. The Rev. Francis Dane signed memorials to the Legislature and the Courts on the 18th of October, against the prosecutions. He had reason to know something about them, for we hear of nine at least of his children, grandchildren, relatives, and servants who had been brought under accusation. He pointed out the snare by which the public mind, as well as the accused themselves, had been misled—the escape afforded to such as would confess. When one spoke out, others followed. When a reasonable explanation was afforded, ordinary people were only too thankful to seize upon it. Though the prisons were filled, and the courts occupied over and over again, there were no more horrors; the accused were all acquitted; and in the following May, Sir William Phipps discharged all the prisoners by proclamation. 'Such a jail-delivery has never been known 'in New England,' is the testimony handed down. The Governor was aware that the clergy, magistrates, and judges, hitherto active, were full of wrath at his course; but public opinion now demanded a reversal of the administration of the last fearful year.

As to the striking feature of the case—the confessions of so large a proportion of the accused—Mr. Upham manifests the perplexity which we encounter in almost all narrators of similar scenes. In all countries and times in which trials for witch-



craft have taken place, we find the historians dealing anxiously with the question—how it could happen that so many persons declared themselves guilty of an impossible offence, when the confession must seal their doom? The solution most commonly offered is one that may apply to a case here and there, but certainly cannot be accepted as disposing of any large number. It is assumed that the victim preferred being killed at once to living on under suspicion, insult, and ill-will, under the imputation of having dealt with the Devil. Probable as this may be in the case of a stout-hearted, reasoning, forecasting person possessed of nerve to carry out a policy of suicide, it can never be believed of any considerable proportion of the ordinary run of old men and women charged with sorcery. The love of life and the horror of a cruel death at the hands of the mob or of the hangman are too strong to admit of a deliberate sacrifice so bold, on the part of terrified and distracted old people like the vast majority of the accused; while the few of a higher order, clearer in mind and stronger in nerve, would not be likely to effect their escape from an unhappy life by a lie of the utmost conceivable gravity. If, in the Salem case, life was saved by confession towards the last, it was for a special reason; and it seems to be a singular instance of such a mode of escape. Some other mode of explanation is needed; and the observations of modern inquiry supply it. There can be no doubt now that the sufferers under nervous disturbances, the subjects of abnormal conditions, found themselves in possession of strange faculties, and thought themselves able to do new and wonderful things. When urged to explain how it was, they could only suppose, as so many of the Salem victims did, that it was by ‘some evil spirit;’ and except where there was such an intervening agency as Mr. Parris’s ‘circle,’ the only supposition was that the intercourse between the Evil Spirit and themselves was direct. It is impossible even now to witness the curious phenomena of somnambulism and catalepsy without a keen sense of how natural and even inevitable it was for similar subjects of the Middle Ages and in Puritan times to believe themselves ensnared by Satan, and actually endowed with his gifts, and to confess their calamity, as the only relief to their scared and miserable minds. This explanation seems not to have occurred to Mr. Upham; and, for want of it, he falls into great amazement at the elaborate artifice with which the sufferers invented their confessions, and adapted them to the state of mind of the authorities and the public. With the right key in his hand, he would have seen only what was simple and natural where he now bids us marvel at the pitch of artful-



ness and skill attained by poor wretches scared out of their natural wits.

The spectacle of the ruin that was left is very melancholy. Orphan children were dispersed; homes were shut up, and properties lost; and what the temper was in which these transactions left the churches and the Village, and the society of the towns, the pastors and the flocks, the Lord's table, the social gathering, the justice hall, the market, and every place where men were wont to meet, we can conceive. It was evidently long before anything like a reasonable and genial temper returned to society in and about Salem. The acknowledgments of error made long after were half-hearted, and so were the expressions of grief and pity in regard to the intolerable woes of the victims. It is scarcely intelligible how the admissions on behalf of the wronged should have been so reluctant, and the sympathy with the devoted love of their nearest and dearest so cold. We must cite what Mr. Upham says in honour of these last, for such solace is needed:—

‘While, in the course of our story, we have witnessed some shocking instances of the violation of the most sacred affections and obligations of life, in husbands and wives, parents and children, testifying against each other, and exerting themselves for mutual destruction, we must not overlook the many instances in which filial, parental, and fraternal fidelity and love have shone conspicuously. It was dangerous to befriend an accused person. Procter stood by his wife to protect her, and it cost him his life. Children protested against the treatment of their parents, and they were all thrown into prison. Daniel Andrew, a citizen of high standing, who had been deputy to the General Court, asserted, in the boldest language, his belief of Rebecca Nurse's innocence; and he had to fly the country to save his life. Many devoted sons and daughters clung to their parents, visited them in prison in defiance of a blood-thirsty mob; kept by their side on the way to execution; expressed their love, sympathy, and reverence to the last; and, by brave and perilous enterprise, got possession of their remains, and bore them back under the cover of midnight to their own thresholds, and to graves kept consecrated by their prayers and tears. One noble young man is said to have effected his mother's escape from the jail, and secreted her in the woods until after the delusion had passed away, provided food and clothing for her, erected a wigwam for her shelter, and surrounded her with every comfort her situation would admit of. The poor creature must, however, have endured a great amount of suffering; for one of her larger limbs was fractured in the all but desperate attempt to rescue her from the prison walls.’ (Vol. ii. p. 348.)

The act of reversal of attainder, passed early in the next century, tells us that ‘some of the principal accusers and wit-



‘nesses in those dark and severe prosecutions have since discovered themselves to be persons of profligate and vicious conversation;’ and on other authority we are assured that, ‘not without spot before, they became afterwards abandoned to open vice.’ This was doubtless true of some; but of many it was not; and of this we shall have a word to say presently.

Mr. Parris’s parsonage soon went to ruin, as did some of the dwellings of the ‘afflicted’ children who learned and practised certain things in his house which he afterwards pronounced to be arts of Satan, and declared to have been pursued without his knowledge, and with the cognisance of only his servants (John and Tituba, the Indian and the negress). Barn, and well, and garden disappeared in a sorry tract of rough ground, and the dwelling became a mere handful of broken bricks. The narrative of the pastor’s struggles and devices to retain his pulpit is very interesting; but they are not related to our object here; and all we need say is, that three sons and sons-in-law of Mrs. Nurse measured their strength against his, and, without having said an intemperate or superfluous word, or swerved from the strictest rules of congregational action, sent him out of the parish. He finally opined that ‘evil angels’ had been permitted to tempt him and his coadjutors on either hand; he admitted that some mistakes had been made; and, said he, ‘I do humbly own this day, before the Lord and his people, that God has been righteously spitting in my face; and I desire to lie low under all this reproach,’ &c.; but the remonstrants could not again sit under his ministry, and his brethren in the Province did not pretend to exculpate him altogether. He buried his wife—against whom no record remains—and departed with his children, the eldest of whom, the playfellow of the ‘afflicted’ children, he had sent away before she had taken harm in the ‘circle.’ He drifted from one small outlying congregation to another, neglected and poor, restless and untamed, though mortified, till he died in 1720. Mr. Noyes died somewhat earlier. He is believed not to have undergone much change, as to either his views or his temper. He was a kind-hearted and amiable man when nothing came in the way; but he could hold no terms with Satan; and in this he insisted to the last that he was right.

Cotton Mather was the survivor of the other two. He died in 1728; and he never was happy again after that last batch of executions. He trusted to his merits, and the genius he exhibited under that onslaught of Satan to raise him to the highest post of clerical power in the Province, and to make him

—what he desired above all else—President of Harvard University. Mr. Upham presents us with a remarkable meditation written by the unhappy man, so simple and ingenuous that it is scarcely possible to read it gravely; but the reader is not the less sensible of his misery. The argument is a sort of remonstrance with God on the recompense his services have met with. He has been appointed to serve the world, and the world does not regard him; the negroes, and (who could believe it?) the negroes are named Cotton Mather in contempt of him; the wise, and the wise despise him; the company, by edifying conversation, and in every company he is avoided and left alone; the female sex, and they speak basely of him; his relatives, and they are such monsters that he may truly say, ‘I am a brother to dragons;’ the Government, and it heaps indignities upon him; the University, and, if he were a block-head, it could not treat him worse than it does. He is to serve all whom he can aid, and nobody ever does anything for him; he is to serve all to whom he can be a helpful and happy minister, and yet he is the most afflicted minister in the country: and many consider his afflictions to be so many miscarriages, and his sufferings in proportion to his sins. There was no popularity or power for him, from the hour when he stood to see his brother Burroughs put to death on the Hill. He seems never to have got over his surprise at his own failures; but he sank into deeper mortification and a more childish peevishness to the end.

Of only one of the class of express accusers—of the ‘afflicted’—will we speak; but not because she was the only one reclaimed. One bewildered child we have described as remorseful, and brave in her remorse; and others married as they would hardly have done if they had been among the ‘profligate.’ Ann Putnam’s case remains the most prominent, and the most pathetic. She was twelve years old when the ‘circle’ at Mr. Parris’s was formed. She had no check from her parents, but much countenance and encouragement from her morbidly-disposed mother. She has the bad distinction of having been the last of the witnesses to declare a ‘vision’ against a suspected person; but, on the other hand, she has the honour, such as it is, of having striven to humble herself before the memory of her victims. When she was nineteen her father died, and her mother followed within a fortnight, leaving the poor girl, in bad health and with scanty means, to take care of a family of children so large that there were eight, if not more, dependent on her. No doubt she was aided, and she did what she could; but she died worn-out at the age of thirty-



six. Ten years before that date she made her peace with the Church and society by offering a public confession in the meeting-house. In order to show what it was that the accusers did admit, we must make room for Ann Putnam's confession:—

‘ “I desire to be humbled before God for that sad and humbling providence that befell my father's family in the year about '92; that I, then being in my childhood, should, by such a providence of God, be made the instrument for the accusing of several persons of a grievous crime, whereby their lives were taken away from them, whom now I have just grounds and good reason to believe they were innocent persons; and that it was a great delusion of Satan that deceived me in that sad time, whereby I justly fear that I have been instrumental with others, though ignorantly and unwittingly, to bring upon myself and this land the guilt of innocent blood; though what was said or done by me against any person I can truly and uprightly say, before God and man, I did it not out of any anger, malice, or ill-will to any person, for I had no such thing against one of them; but what I did was ignorantly, being deluded by Satan. And particularly, as I was a chief instrument of accusing Goodwife Nurse and her two sisters, I desire to lie in the dust, and to be humbled for it, in that I was a cause, with others, of so sad a calamity to them and their families; for which cause I desire to lie in the dust, and earnestly beg forgiveness of God, and from all those unto whom I have given just cause of sorrow and offence, whose relations were taken away or accused. (Signed) Ann Putnam.”

‘ This confession was read before the congregation, together with her relation, August 25, 1706; and she acknowledged it.

‘ J. GREEN, *Pastor.*’ (Vol. ii. p. 510.)

The most agreeable picture ever afforded by this remarkable community is that which our eyes rest on at the close of the story. One of the church-members had refused to help to send Mr. Parris away, on the ground that the Village had had four pastors, and had gone through worse strifes with every one; but he saw a change of scene on the advent of the fifth. The Rev. Joseph Green was precisely the man for the place and occasion. He was young—only two-and-twenty—and full of hope and cheerfulness, while sobered by the trials of the time. He had a wife and infants, and some private property, so that he could at once plant down a happy home among his people, without any injurious dependence on them. While exemplary in clerical duty, he encouraged an opposite tone of mind to that which had prevailed—put all the devils out of sight, promoted pigeon-shooting and fishing, and headed the young men in looking after hostile Indians. Instead of being jealous at the uprising of new churches, he went to lay the

foundations, and invited the new brethren to his home. He promoted the claims of the sufferers impoverished by the recent social convulsion; he desired to bury, not only delusions, but ill offices in silence; and by his hospitality he infused a cheerful social spirit into his stricken people. The very business of 'seating' the congregation was so managed under his ministry as that members of the sinning and suffering families—members not in too direct an antagonism—were brought together for prayer, singing, and Sabbath-greeting, forgiving and forgetting as far as was possible. Thus did this excellent pastor create a new scene of peace and goodwill, which grew brighter for eighteen years, when he died at the age of forty. At the earliest moment that was prudent, he induced his church to cancel the excommunication of Rebecca Nurse and Giles Corey. It was ten years more before the hard and haughty mother church in Salem would do its part; but Mr. Green had the satisfaction of seeing that record also cleansed of its foul stains three years before his death. Judge Sewall had before made his penitential acknowledgment of proud error in full assembly, and had resumed his seat on the bench amidst the forgiveness and respect of society; Chief Justice Stoughton had retired from the courts in obstinate rage at his conflicts with Satan having been cut short; the physicians hoped they should have no more patients 'under the evil hand,' to make them look foolish and feel helpless; and the Tragedy was over. There were doubtless secret tears and groans, horrors of shame and remorse by night and by day, and indignant removal of the bones of the murdered from outcast graves, and abstraction of painful pages from books of record, and much stifling of any conversation which could grow into tradition. The Tragedy was, no doubt, the central interest of society, families, and individuals throughout the province for the life of one generation. Then, as silence had been kept in the homes as well as at church and market, the next generation entered upon life almost unconscious of the ghastly distinction which would attach in history to Massachusetts in general, and Salem in particular, as the scene of the Delusion and the Tragedy which showed the New World to be in essentials no wiser than the Old.

How effectually the story of that year 1692 was buried in silence is shown by a remark of Mr. Upham's—that it has been too common for the Witch Tragedy to be made a jest of, or at least to be spoken of with levity. We can have no doubt that his labours have put an end to this. It is inconceivable that there can ever again be a joke heard on the sub-



ject of Witchcraft in Salem. But this remark of our author brings us at once home to our own country, time, and experience. It suggests the question whether the lesson afforded by this singularly perfect piece of history is more or less appropriate to our own day and generation.

We have already observed that at the date of these events, the only possible explanation of the phenomena presented was the fetish solution which had in all ages been recurred to as a matter of course. In heathen times it was god, goddess, or nymph who gave knowledge, or power, or gifts of healing, or of prophecy, to men. In Christian times it was angel, or devil, or spirit of the dead; and this conception was in full force over all Christendom when the Puritan emigrants settled in New England. The celebrated sermon of the Rev. Mr. Lawson, in the work before us, discloses the elaborate doctrine held by the class of men who were supposed to know best in regard to the powers given by Satan to his agents, and the evils with which he afflicted his victims; and there was not only no reason why the pastor's hearers should question his interpretations, but no possibility that they should supply any of a different kind. The accused themselves, while unable to admit or conceive that they were themselves inspired by Satan, could propose no explanation but that the acts were done by 'some bad spirit.' And such has been the fetish tendency to this hour, through all the advance that has been made in science, and in the arts of observation and of reasoning. The fetish tendency—that of ascribing one's own consciousness to external objects, as when the dog takes a watch to be alive because it ticks, and when the savage thinks his god is angry because it thunders, and when the Puritan catechumen cries out in hysteria that Satan has set a witch to strangle her—that constant tendency to explain everything by the facts, the feelings, and the experience of the individual's own nature, is no nearer dying out now than at the time of the Salem Tragedy; and hence, in part, the seriousness and the instructiveness of this story to the present generation. Ours is the generation which has seen the spread of Spiritualism in Europe and America, a phenomenon which deprives us of all right to treat the Salem Tragedy as a jest, or to adopt a tone of superiority in compassion for the agents in that dismal drama. There are hundreds, even several thousands, of lunatics in the asylums of the United States, and not a few in our own country, who have been lodged there by the pursuit of intercourse with spirits; in other words, by ascribing to living but invisible external agents movements of their own minds. Mr. Parris remarked, in 1692,



that of old, witches were only ignorant old women ; whereas, in his day, they had come to be persons of knowledge, holiness, and devotion who had been drawn into that damnation ; and in our day, we hear remarks on the superior refinement of spirit intercourses, in comparison with the witch doings at Salem ; but the cases are all essentially the same. In all, some peculiar and inexplicable appearances occur, and are, as a matter of course, when their reality cannot be denied, ascribed to spiritual agency. We may believe that we could never act as the citizens of Salem acted in their superstition and their fear ; and this may be true ; but the course of speculation is, in ‘ spiritual circles,’ very much the same as in Mr. Parris’ parlour.

And how much less excuse there is for our generation than for his ! We are very far yet from being able to explain the well-known and indisputable facts which occur from time to time, in all countries where men abide and can give an account of themselves ; such facts as the phenomena of natural somnambulism, of double consciousness, of suspended sensation while consciousness is awake, and the converse—of a wide range of intellectual and instinctive operations bearing the character of marvels to such as cannot wait for the solution. We are still far from being able to explain such mysteries, in the only true sense of the word *explaining*—that is, being able to refer the facts to the natural cause to which they belong ; but we have an incalculable advantage over the people of former centuries in knowing that for all proved facts there is a natural cause ; that every cause to which proved facts within our cognisance are related is destined to become known to us ; and that, in the present case, we have learned in what direction to search for it, and have set out on the quest. None of us can offer even the remotest conjecture as to what the law of the common action of what we call mind and body may be. If we could, the discovery would have been already made. But, instead of necessarily assuming, as the Salem people did, that what they witnessed was the operation of spiritual upon human beings, we have, as our field of observation and study, a region undreamed of by them—the brain as an organised part of the human frame, and the nervous system, implicating more facts, more secrets, and more marvels than our forefathers attributed to the whole body.

It is very striking to hear the modern lectures on physiological subjects delivered in every capital in Europe, and to compare the calm and easy manner in which the most astonishing and the most infernal phenomena are described and discussed, with the horror and dismay that the same facts would have created, if dis-



closed by divines in churches three centuries ago. Dr. Maudsley, in his recent work on 'the Physiology and Pathology of Mind,' and other physicians occupied in his line of practice, lead us through the lunatic asylums of every country, pointing out as ordinary or extraordinary incidents the same 'afflictions' of children and other morbid persons which we read of, one after another, in the Salem story. It is a matter of course with such practitioners and authors to anticipate such phenomena when they have detected the morbid conditions which generate them. Mr. Upham himself is evidently very far indeed from understanding or suspecting how much light is thrown on the darkest part of his subject by physiological researches carried on to the hour when he laid down his pen. His view is confined almost exclusively to the theory of fraud and falsehood, as affording the true key. It is not probable that anybody disputes or doubts the existence of guilt and folly in many or all of the agents concerned. There was an antecedent probability of both in regard to Mr. Parris's slaves, and to such of the young children as they most influenced; and that kind of infection is apt to spread. Moreover, experience shows us that the special excitement of that nervous condition induces moral vagaries at least as powerfully as mental delusions. In the state of temper existing among the inhabitants of the Village when the mischievous club of girls was formed at the pastor's house, it was inevitable that, if magic was entered upon at all, it would be malignant magic. Whatever Mr. Upham has said in illustration of that aspect of the case his readers will readily agree to. But there is a good deal more, even of the imperfect notices that remain after the abstraction and destruction of the records in the shame and anguish that ensued, which we, in our new dawn of science, can perceive to be an affair of the bodily organisation. We are, therefore, obliged to him for rescuing this tremendous chapter of history from oblivion, and for the security in which he has placed the materials of evidence. In another generation the science of the human frame may have advanced far enough to elucidate some of the Salem mysteries, together with some obscure facts in all countries, which cannot be denied, while as yet they cannot be understood. When that time comes, a fearful weight of imputation will be removed from the name and fame of many agents and sufferers who have been the subjects of strange maladies and strange faculties, in all times and countries. As we are now taught the new discoveries of the several nerve-centres, and the powers which are appropriated to them; and when we observe what a severance may exist



between the so-called organ of any sense or faculty and the operation of the sense or faculty ; and how infallibly ideas and emotions may be generated, and even beliefs created in minds sane and insane, by certain manipulations of the nerves and brain, we see how innocently this phenomenon may be presented in natural somnambulism. Sleepwalkers have been known in many countries, and treated of in medical records by their physicians, who could not only walk, and perform all ordinary acts in the dark as well as in the light, but who went on writing or reading without interruption though an opaque substance—a book or a slate—was interposed, and would dot the *i*'s and cross the *t*'s with unconscious correctness without any use of their eyes. There is a wide field of inquiry open in this direction, now that the study of the nervous system has been begun, however minute is the advance as yet.

It is needless to dwell on the objection made to the rising hopefulness in regard to the study of Man, and the mysteries of his nature. Between the multitude who have still no notion of any alternative supposition to that of possession or inspiration by spirits, or, at least, intercourse with such beings, and others who fear 'Materialism' if too close an attention is paid to the interaction of the mind and the nerves, and those who always shrink from new notions in matters so interesting, and those who fear that religion may be implicated in any slight shown to angel or devil, and those who will not see or hear any evidence whatever which lies in a direction opposite to their prejudices, we are not likely to get on too fast. But neither can the inquiry lapse under neglect. The spectacle presented now is of the same three sorts of people that appear in all satires, in all literatures, since the pursuit of truth in any mode or direction became a recognised object anywhere and under any conditions. Leaving out of view the multitude who are irrelevant to the case, from having no knowledge, and being therefore incapable of an opinion, there is the large company of the superficial and lightminded, who are always injuring the honour and beauty of truth by the levity, the impertinence, the absurdity of the enthusiasm they pretend, and the nonsense they talk about 'some new thing.' No period of society has been more familiar with that class and its mischief-making than our own. There is the other large class of the contemporaries of any discovery or special advance, who, when they can absent themselves from the scene no longer, look and listen, and bend all their efforts to hold their ground of life-long opinion, usually succeeding so far as to escape any direct admission that more is known than when they were born. These are no



ultimate hindrance. When Harvey died, no physician in Europe above the age of forty believed in the circulation of the blood; but the truth was perfectly safe; and so it will be with the case of the psychological relations of the nervous system when the present course of investigation has sustained a clearer verification and further advance. On this point we have the sayings of two truth-seekers, wise in quality of intellect, impartial and dispassionate in temper, and fearless in the pursuit of their aims. The late Prince Consort is vividly remembered for the characteristic saying which spread rapidly over the country, that he could not understand the conduct of the medical profession in England in leaving the phenomena of mesmerism to the observation of unqualified persons, instead of undertaking an inquiry which was certainly their proper business, in proportion as they professed to pursue *science*. The other authority we refer to is the late Mr. Hallam. A letter of his lies before us from which we quote a passage, familiar in its substance, doubtless, to his personal friends, to whom he always avowed the view which it presents, and well worthy of note to such readers as may not be aware of the observation and thought he devoted to the phenomena of mesmerism during the last quarter-century of his long life. ‘It appears to me  
‘probable that the various phenomena of mesmerism, together  
‘with others, independent of mesmerism properly so called,  
‘which have lately’ (the date is 1844) ‘been brought to light,  
‘are fragments of some general law of nature which we are  
‘not yet able to deduce from them, merely because they are  
‘destitute of visible connexion—the links being hitherto want-  
‘ing which are to display the entire harmony of effects pro-  
‘ceeding from a single cause.’

What room is there not for hopefulness when we compare such an observation as this with Mr. Parris’s dogmatical exposition of Satan’s dealings with men! or when we contrast the calm and cheerful tone of the philosopher with the stubborn wrath of Chief Justice Stoughton, and with the penitential laments of Judge Sewall! We might contrast it also with the wild exultation of those of the Spiritualists of our own day who can form no conception of the modesty and patience requisite for the sincere search for truth, and who, once finding themselves surrounded by facts and appearances new and strange, assume that they have discovered a bridge over the bottomless ‘gulf beyond which lies the spirit land,’ and wander henceforth in a fools’ paradise, despising and pitying all who are less rash, ignorant, and presumptuous than themselves. It is this company of fanatics—the first of the three classes we spoke of



—which is partly answerable for the backwardness of the second; but the blame does not rest exclusively in one quarter. There is an indolence in the medical class which is the commonest reproach against them in every age of scientific activity, and which has recently been heroically avowed and denounced in a public address by no less a member of the profession than Sir Thomas Watson.\* There is a conservative reluctance to change of view or of procedure. There is also a lack of moral courage, by no means surprising in an order of men whose lives are spent in charming away troubles, and easing pains and cares, and ‘making things pleasant’—by no means surprising, we admit, but exceedingly unfavourable to the acknowledgment of phenomena that are strange and facts that are unintelligible.

This brings us to the third class—the very small number of persons who are, in the matter of human progress, the salt of the earth; the few who can endure to see without understanding, to hear without immediately believing or disbelieving, to learn what they can, without any consideration of what figure they themselves shall make in the transaction; and even to be unable to reconcile the new phenomena with their own prior experience or conceptions. There is no need to describe how rare this class must necessarily be, for everyone who has eyes sees how near the passions and the prejudices of the human being lie to each other. These are the few who unite the two great virtues of earnestly studying the facts, and keeping their temper, composure, and cheerfulness, through whatever perplexity their inquiry may involve. It is remarkable that while the world is echoing all round and incessantly with the praise of the life or the man spent in following truth wherever it may lead, the world is always resounding also with the angry passions of men who resent all opinions which are not their own, and denounce with fury or with malice any countenance given to mere proposals to inquire in certain directions which they think proper to reprobate. Not only was it horrible blasphemy in Galileo to think as he did of the motion of the earth, but in his friends to look through his glass at the stars.

This Salem story is indeed shocking in every view—to our pride as rational beings, to our sympathy as human beings, to our faith as Christians, to our complacency as children of the Reformation. It is so shocking that some of us may regret that the details have been revived with such an abundance of

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\* Address on the Present State of Therapeutics. Delivered at the opening meeting of the Clinical Society of London, January 10, 1868. By Sir Thomas Watson, Bart., M.D.



evidence. But this is no matter of regret, but rather of congratulation, if we have not outgrown the need of admonition from the past. How does that consideration stand?

At the end of nearly three centuries we find ourselves relieved of a heavy burden of fear and care about the perpetual and unbounded malice of Satan and his agents. Witchcraft has ceased to be one of the gravest curses of the human lot. We have parted with one after another of the fetish or conjectural persuasions about our relations with the world of spirit or mind, regarded as in direct opposition to the world of matter. By a succession of discoveries we have been led to an essentially different view of life and thought from any dreamed of before the new birth of science; and at this day, and in our own metropolis, we have Sir Henry Holland telling us how certain treatment of this or that department of the nervous system will generate this or that state of belief and experience, as well as sensation. We have Dr. Carpenter disclosing facts of incalculable significance about brain-action without consciousness, and other vital mysteries. We have Dr. Maudsley showing, in the cells of the lunatic asylum, not only the very realm of Satan, as our fathers would have thought, but the discovery that it is not Satan, after all, that makes the havoc, but our own ignorance which has seduced us into a blasphemous superstition, instead of inciting us to the study of ourselves. And these are not all our teachers. Amidst the conflict of phenomena of the human mind and body, we have arrived now at the express controversy of Psychology against Physiology. Beyond the mere statement of the fact we have scarcely advanced a step. The first cannot be, with any accuracy, called a science at all, and the other is in little more than a rudimentary state; but it is no small gain to have arrived at some conception of the nature of the problem set before us, and at some liberty of hypothesis as to its conditions. In brief, and in the plainest terms, while there is still a multitude deluding and disporting itself with a false hypothesis about certain mysteries of the human mind, and claiming to have explained the marvels of Spiritualism by making an objective world of their own subjective experience, the scientific physiologists are proceeding, by observation and experiment, to penetrate more and more secrets of our intellectual and moral life.



- ART. II.—1. *A Dictionary of the English Language*. By ROBERT GORDON LATHAM, M.A., M.D., F.R.S., &c. Founded on that of Dr. Samuel Johnson, as edited by the Rev. H. J. Todd, M.A. With numerous Emendations and Additions. Parts I. to XXIV. London: 1868.
2. *A Dictionary of English Etymology*. By HENSLEIGH WEDGWOOD, M.A., late Fellow of Chr. Coll. Cambridge. 3 vols. London: 1859.
3. *A Glossarial Index to the Printed English Literature of the Thirteenth Century*. By HERBERT COLERIDGE. London: 1858.
4. *A Select Glossary of English Words used formerly in Senses different from the Present*. By RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH, D.D. Second edition, revised and improved. London: 1856.

DR. JOHNSON'S Dictionary was the first attempt at a critical review of the English language, and he is justly considered as the father of English lexicography. The substantial truth of this statement is not affected by the existence in the previous century of such learned works as those of Junius and Skinner. These works are in many respects excellent, showing industry, knowledge, and research, and, considering the state of philology at the time, often surprisingly successful in their main object, that of elucidating the derivation of English words. But they are not, either in form or substance, English dictionaries in the proper meaning of the term. In their general aspect they are rather contributions to European, or at least Teutonic etymology, derived from the special study of one of the Teutonic tongues, and in this respect may be fairly ranked with the works of Wachter, Schilter, and Kilian. The mere fact of their being written in Latin sufficiently illustrates their general position as learned works addressed to scholars at large, rather than designed for national or popular use. They are both, moreover, as their titles indicate, occupied exclusively with etymology, and etymology is only one means of illustrating the signification of words, and that not the most authoritative or direct. They no doubt supplied valuable materials to the English lexicographer, and Johnson turned them to good account, having relied, as he tells us, mainly on Skinner for his etymologies. But they are not English dictionaries. The other works claiming this title produced during the former half of the eighteenth century are in reality glossaries of foreign, archaic, and technical terms, or mere vocabularies, lists of words